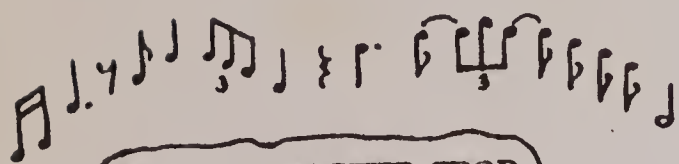




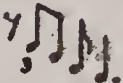
# Operatic Anagrams






AGAIN A MASTER CROP  
RAPS A ROMANTIC AGE,  
AS GREAT PANORAMIC  
PARTS GO IN A CAMERA;  
A ROPE, A CASTING ARM;  
ART, A GEM CAPARISON  
ON A PRIMA STAR CAGE.




ANTIC RAMPAGE, SOAR.  
MASCAGNI TAPE, ROAR.  
GO TAP CARMEN'S ARIA.  
A CARE, POSING MARTA.  
A MANAGER, TOSCA. RIP  
A GARMENT, O SCARPIA;  
A MARS TOGA. A PRINCE  
ROAMS A CARNAGE PIT.



AMERICA, GRANT SOAP,  
OR MAP SATANIC RAGE.  
TRAGIC PANAMA ROSE  
TO REAPING MASCARA  
TEARS OR A CAMPAIGN.



A PARAGON MIST RACE  
RAN TO A MAGIC SPEAR.  
I MEAN TO GRASP A CAR,  
TAG A PARIS ROMANCE.  
I SCAR A RAGMAN POET,  
SCORE A TRAMP AGAIN.  
A TOPMAN'S CARRIAGE  
CAN STOP A MARRIAGE.



john andrew mann

## ABOUT THE COVER

The lyrics sung by Wotan are drawn from this book's title. Each line is an anagram of **Operatic Anagrams**. Other examples of this are found on pages 16 and 17. A brief treatise on it as a serious approach to poetry is given on pages 23-25.

Cover by John Andrew Mann

## SPELLING CHANGES AND DUPLICATE TITLES

I state on page 2 that if alternative spellings for an opera exist, we'll use the one preferred by the Met. There are two possible exceptions, because the Met seems to have changed its mind. In earlier literature, such as *The Metropolitan Opera Annals 1947 (1883-1947)* and Irving Kolodin's *The Metropolitan Opera 1883-1960*, the spellings of Verdi's and Dukas's respective works are *Don Carlos* and *Ariane et Barbe Bleue*. These spellings are given in most, if not all, writings about opera. Recent Met literature, including *The Met—One Hundred Years of Grand Opera (1883-1983)* by Martin Mayer, has changed these to *Don Carlo* and *Ariane et Barbe Bleu*. *Bleue* is a feminine adjective, and *Barbe* is a feminine noun. *Bluebeard*, of course, is a masculine person. In France he is usually the masculine *Barbe-Bleu*. *Carlos* is Spanish (as was the actual person). *Carlo* is Italian. I don't have copies of the original manuscripts to determine the composers' spelling preferences. But if Verdi called his opera *Don Carlos*, Lt. Pinkerton may soon be making love to *Madama Farfalla*. In this book I use the less recent, and more traditional, spellings.

Sometimes more than one composer has written an opera with the same name. Both Puccini and Leoncavallo gave us a *La Bohème*. Monteverdi and Caselli both wrote a *La Favola d'Orfeo*. Both Handel and Malipiero wrote a *Julius Caesar*. Malipiero's is from Shakespeare's play. Handel's is fully titled *Julius Caesar in Egypt (Giulio Cesare in Egitto)* but the Met lists it as *Julius Caesar*. There are other instances of duplicate titles. When naming the composer of such a title we give that of the most well-known work.

## About the Author

John Andrew Mann is author of over 25 books on varied subjects, including ethnobotany, psychopharmacology, gerontology, nutrition, virology, theology, poetry, musical comedy, and satire. Most have been in print and popular for over 20 years. He is founder of the MegaHealth Society and the 7,000-member, nondogmatic Church of the Tree of Life.



# Operatic Anagrams

by

John Andrew Mann

✱

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## HOW THIS HAPPENED

This book began as a question that I planned to send to the Texaco Opera Quiz. This quiz airs, usually, during the second intermission of Saturday matinee radio broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera. Listeners submit questions about opera, which a panel of experts attempts to answer.

My question was: "Can you unscramble the following (five or six at most) anagrams and name the operas from which they are derived?"

I began to invent these five or six anagrams. It was great fun; a near-addictive game. Before long I had so many fascinating anagrams that I couldn't decide which to use. And more kept coming. The game was now out of hand. It was no longer a question for a quiz. It was the birth of this little book.

## ANAGRAMS AND OPERA

Anagrams are not new to opera. Arrigo Boito signed his libretto for Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* with an anagram of his name: **TOBIA GORRIO**. Anagrams have been made on many famous names, including those of operatic composers and performers. A famous example is: **ADEPT ITALIAN**, which is a most descriptive anagram for **ADELINA PATTI**. Another, of my own invention, is: **REWARDING; HE WILL CHARM**, This unscrambles fittingly to **WILHELM RICHARD WAGNER**.

Ideally, an anagram says something appropriate of of its subject. Some anagrams, however, succeed by

saying something glaringly inappropriate. Examples are: **TRUE HOVEL** for **THE LOUVRE**, and **DWARF HOTEL** for **THE WALDORF**. Some people call these antianagrams or antigrams. Often it is not possible to construct an anagram that fulfills the above specifications. In such a case one may settle for one that is amusing, or at least interesting. Consider these anagrams on the names of well-known composers: **GHOST VAULTS** for **GUSTAV HOLST**; **MAGPIES CAN RIOT** for **PIETRO MASCAGNI**; **BRAN BAGEL** for **ALBAN BERG**; and **NONE HELD SEX FILMS** for **FELIX MENDELSSOHN**. These anagrams say nothing that is descriptive or expressly counterdescriptive of their subjects. But they do have a bizarre sense of their own that makes them acceptable. A pseudonym anagram on one's name must merely be plausible; not necessarily clever or witty. The Boito anagram is a likely Italian name. Similarly, I might change my own name, **JOHN ANDREW MANN**, to **NORMAN J. NEWHAND**.

### PLAYING THE GAME

This book is presented as a series of puzzles with interwoven hints and commentary. Answers follow each anagram. Readers may want to shield them while trying to decipher the operas' titles. Sometimes more than one anagram is given for the same work. Umlauts or other such marks in a title do not carry into the anagram. If alternative spellings for an opera exist, we'll use the one preferred by the Met. Unless otherwise stated, all titles are in their original languages. Anagrams and titles are in bold capital letters.

We are not trying to rate the reader's knowledge of opera or ability at solving anagrams. No system for scoring is given. In the spirit of the Texaco Opera Quiz, which inspired the book, it isn't a contest; just a friendly game. Readers can rate themselves on the basis of their own expectations and results.

To get a feel for the game, let's begin with some short and not-too-difficult combinations, then go on to the longer and more interesting ones. Later we'll have some suggestions for readers who want to invent their own anagrams.

## LET THE GAMES BEGIN

It can be near-impossible to derive a decent anagram from a very short title like **AIDA** or **LULU**. However, there are some good ones with as few as five or six letters. Here are several:

**ROMAN** occupation of Gaul around 50 BC is the setting for this 1831 Italian opera.

From the anagram, **ROMAN**, we get Bellini's **NORMA**.

\* \* \*

If you seek a lovely meditation theme, this 1894 French opera **HAS IT**.

The opera from **HAS IT** is Jules Massenet's **THAIS**.

\* \* \*

In this all-time favorite the heroine pays **A COST** in money to save the man she loves, but his life and hers are lost anyway. There are many more anagrams on this work, including: **COAST**, **COATS**, **ASCOT**, and **TACOS**.

The opera, of course, is **TOSCA**.

\* \* \*

The title role of this 1884 French opera is played by **NO MAN**.

Again by Massenet, the opera is **MANON**.

\* \* \*

If her sewing machine had friction problems, the forewoman might suggest that she **USE OIL**.

The sewing girls are busy in the workshop in Act II, Scene 2 of Gustave Charpentier's **LOUISE**.

\* \* \*

In a German baron's French opera, the lady takes on this name and pretends to be of a lesser station. But that doesn't mean that she gets to ride **A TRAM**.

The composer is Baron Friedrich von Flotow. The opera is **MARTA**.

\* \* \* \* \*



So we've mastered the five-or-six-letter anagram. Let's move on to ones with six or more letters.

This opera is rarely performed, but the play has been a hit for ages. Had this pensive young prince said "**HALT ME**" to his friends, they might have heeded him and averted tragedy.

We are talking about Ambrose Thomas's operatic adaptation of Shakespeare's **HAMLET**.

\* \* \*

This opera's fans insist that it is **NO BORE**.

Carl Maria von Weber's **OBERON**.

\* \* \*

She might have said to a famous saint: "It's all right that you love the Lord, but I want you to love **ME ALSO**." He'd do well to tell her to **LOSE MA**.

Oscar Wilde could have had Richard Strauss score such a statement for **SALOME**. The Baptist might have kept his head if she had dumped Herodias, her wicked mother.

\* \* \*

The king in this opera is traditionally sung by a female soprano. We might call him an opposite **SEX REX**.

The opera is **XERXES** by George Frideric Handel.

\* \* \*

Cheered by the crowd and jeered by his ensign as a lion, he'd have a **LEO LOT**, were his fate in his stars.

Iago jeers, "Behold the lion!" in Verdi's **OTELLO**.

\* \* \*

She let her husband die and deceived her brothers to gain **A REIGN** of the family business. The play on which this 1949 opera was based was a big box office **GAINER**. So get your brain **IN GEAR** and solve this.

The opera is Marc Blitzstein's **REGINA**, based on Lillian Hellman's play *The Little Foxes*.

\* \* \*

Many people **ADMIRE** this opera, although it isn't performed often. I **DREAM** of seeing it someday.

This would be Christoph Willibald Gluck's **ARMIDE**.

\* \* \*

At one time, this 1844 opera was regarded as one of the composer's cruder and **INANER** works. Today, however, we find that a proper performance can be quite rewarding.

**ERNANI** by Verdi.

\* \* \*

With so much vengeance in her heart, it's unlikely that there's anyone she'd **LET RAKE** her over the coals.

**ELEKTRA** by Richard Strauss.

\* \* \*

The wrongly imprisoned husband might say: "**I DO LIFE**." His wife might say: "**I FOILED** the plot."

**FIDELIO** by Ludwig van Beethoven.

\* \* \*

Since this lesser-known one-act opera is a matter of life or death, it cannot be said to be in **TRIVIA'S** realm.

In Gustav Holst's **SĀVITRI** a wife tricks Death to make him return her husband from his realm.

\* \* \*

Cold and hungry in their meager garret, they might have fared better in a more **ABLE HOME**.

Puccini's **LA BOHÈME**.

\* \* \*

When the girl in negligee confesses that she wrote letters in her sister's name to lure the man she loves, he learns that she's not a boy. This opera sure has **A BARE-ALL** ending.

The opera is **ARABELLA** by Richard Strauss.

\* \* \*

She kisses his **LIPS AFAR** in a foreign land, but he resists her seductive charms. It seems that he was no **FRAIL SAP**.

Wagner's **PARSIFAL** resists Kundry's advances in the garden at Klingsor's castle in the Saracen lands.

\* \* \*

She reigned long in the **ANGLO AIR**. At the end of Act I she sings her **LONG ARIA**.

She is England's Queen Elizabeth I in **GLORIANA** by Benjamin Britten. She closes Act I with a soliloquy and prayer.

\* \* \*

**IF GREED IS** the reason for mounting grief in the tales that precede it, **GRIEF DIES** as love awakens in the Third Act of this third tale.

In the third drama of Wagner's Ring, **SIEGFRIED** awakens Brunnhilde, and all previous grief seems to fade for the moment.

\* \* \*

The composer started in the German Late Romantic style. With this and other works, he evolved out of the **WAGNER RUT** towards an atonal style of his own.

The composer is Arnold Schoenberg. The opera is **ERWARTUNG**. (Expectation).

\* \* \*

This jeering jester **GOT TO RILE** a lot of people. Verdi's **RIGOLETTO**.

\* \* \*

In her dream, the accused maiden may have sensed that there was a **LONER NIGH** who'd save her. Later, when he had to go, she could beg: "**LINGER HON**", but to no avail.

**LOHENGRIN** by Wagner.

\* \* \*



His father's feelings towards the Flemish heretics **RAN SO COLD** that he tried to intervene for them.

Verdi's **DON CARLOS**. Spain's Philip II treats the Flemish harshly, and his son Carlos protests.

\* \* \*

It might have been a **HUMID MEET** if this seance were on a wet afternoon.

**THE MEDIUM** by Gian-Carlo Menotti.

\* \* \*

Sated on pleasure, he sought a **SANER HAUNT** in the outside world.

The abode of Venus had been the haunt of Wagner's **TANNHÄUSER** until he began to long for the real world.

\* \* \*

In Act I, the robbed couple, the dragoons and the bandit in disguise are gathered under **A VALID ROOF** at this fine and proper inn.

The opera is Daniel Auber's **FRA DIAVOLO** (Brother Devil). Its subtitle is *The Inn of Terracina*.

\* \* \*

In Act IV of this five-act opera, John is saying: "Let thy belief that I am chosen by God **PROPEL THEE** to follow me."

That's John of Leyden in Meyerbeer's **LE PROPHÈTE**.

\* \* \*

The Psalms are **IN A PSALTER**; not the Mass, which this real-life protagonist had to set to music. In the USA today, the Mass will often **SPARE LATIN** and be sung in English.

**PALESTRINA** by Hans Pfitzner.

\* \* \*

In Act II a father tells his loving daughter how **WEAK I RULED**. In Act III she tries to evade him, but he's **DUE LIKE WAR**. She can't get her half-sister a ride from his wrath and must advise: **IRE DUE. WALK**.

Except for having a baby, all the poor dear does is RUE, WALK, DIE. Father tucks daughter in and thinks: before anyone disturbs her, I DUEL WAKER.

You must know by now: it's Wagner's DIE WALKÜRE.

\* \* \*

He could say: "I RODE SEX UP through the centuries in a most complex way."

Igor Stravinsky's OEDIPUS REX.

\* \* \*

The composer never got to see all of this opera, because the theater management chose to TRY ONE LESS Part of this two-part epic.

When Hector Berlioz's LES TROYENS (The Trojans) was first performed in Paris in 1863, Part I was excluded.

\* \* \*

She was frail and AT A TRAVAIL when she was told that it was more loving to leave her lover.

Violetta was at a travail when her lover's father told her this in Verdi's LA TRAVIATA (The Frail One).

\* \* \*

Sometimes he pursued trouble, sometimes he avoided it. He was NONAVOIDING in the end when he invited it. When it knocked at his door, he might have lived to save his soul by sending his valet to announce that there was NO VAIN DOG IN.

Mozart's DON GIOVANNI.

\* \* \*

SOME FEEL FIT to make a wager with God, but they must be demons. And so the old man MET LIFE'S FOE. But the devil lost.

The old man is Faust. The demon is MEFISTOFELE. The composer and librettist is Arrigo Boito. Faust resists temptation and is saved. God wins the bet.

\* \* \*



Kills her own child to avenge her mother's death?  
She's definitely some bizarre kind of **LOVE TRAITOR**.

Azucena in Verdi's **IL TROVATORE** (The Troubador).

\* \* \*

He who had been **ILL ROSE. SONG** had cured him.

In Stravinsky's **LE ROSSIGNOL**, the Nightingale's  
song cures the dying Emperor of China.

\* \* \*

And now let's try a little rhyme:

### **SINGLED HOARD**

Long, long ago, in a realm down below,  
The Loveless One fashioned a thing;  
Turning simple delight into limitless might.  
We might call this thing **HADES' OLD RING**.

Alberich forswears love and steals the gold that  
was the simple joy of the Rhinemaids. In subter-  
ranean Nibelheim he makes of it the Ring with which  
he amasses a treasure hoard and intends to rule the  
world. But others have singled out the hoard to be  
theirs. All this in Wagner's **DAS RHEINGOLD**. Note  
that the rhyme's title is also an anagram.

\* \* \*

If thou hadst difficulty reaching out to someone  
thou woudst wed, this might have **LENT THEE HOPE**.

Ben can't propose, because someone's always call-  
ing Lucy. So he goes outside and gives her a ring,  
in Menotti's **THE TELEPHONE**.

\* \* \*

He establishes a **VIGOROUS BOND** with his people in  
the Prologue, but this is gone when Act I begins.

**BORIS GODUNOV** by Modest Mussorgsky.

\* \* \*

The German composer lived mostly in England. The  
libretto is Italian, and the title person is Roman.  
So we'll spell it in Latin, as it is also known in

English. The clear intent of the Egyptian soldiers to kill him IS JURAL CAUSE for Rome to make a case.

Handel's JULIUS CAESAR (Giulio Cesare).

\* \* \*

Flippant about acts of infidelity, not to be taken too seriously, this two-act opera tries to TIE FUN TO ACTS of this sort.

Mozart's COSÌ FAN TUTTE.

\* \* \*

It aired on BBC-TV in 1971. Perhaps we can call it: NEW WAVE ON RIG.

OWEN WINGRAVE by Benjamin Britten.

\* \* \*

He joins the army to pay a quack to help him attract the lady he loves. But her genuine affection for him needs no such spurious magic. She wants to let him know: "I'm not Isolde, I'M REAL, SOLDIER."

In Donizetti's L'ELISIR D'AMORE, Nemorino got the notion about the potion when Adina read the story of Tristan and Isolde drinking the Elixer of Love.

\* \* \*

His lover takes the place of a condemned woman, and he gets to die NEAR A NICER HEAD.

In Umberto Giordano's "Revolutionary" opera, Madeleine does this so she can go to the guillotine with ANDREA CHÉNIER.

\* \* \*

The lovers face the final tests together: a flow due to water and a BLAZE DUE TO FIRE.

DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE (The Magic Flute) by Mozart.

\* \* \*

He was a fool to look back. It meant she had to go back. Apart again, she LOVED A FOOL AFAR. With its antique instrumentation, some might say that this 1607 opera has the FLAVOR OF OLD ALE.



Orpheus sneaks a peek, so Eurydice must return to Hades, in Claudio Monteverdi's **LA FAVOLA D'ORFEO** (The Myth of Orpheus).

\* \* \*

Two half brothers and the fiance' of one; near the end of Act II, this **GANG MET TO MURDER** (or to plan the murder of) the innocent hero.

Gunther, Hagen and Brunnhilde plot the murder of Siegfried in Wagner's **GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG** (Twilight of the Gods).

\* \* \*

When he realizes how devoted she had been during his three-year term of absence, his guilt might move him to say: **"A BAD TERM. MY FAULT."**

Lt. Pinkerton in Puccini's **MADAMA BUTTERFLY**.

\* \* \*

Mom is a nag. Their hostess is a hag. The hag gets bagged and dragged. When the kids are found, mom goes on a kinder jag. In the end **GENTLE HANDS RULE**.

**HÄNSEL UND GRETEL** by Engelbert Humperdinck. The witch is dragged from the oven as a large cake, and in future mother will handle the kids more gently.

\* \* \*

If the Baron fancied himself a lover, this **LOVER DRANK EASIER** when he got a note from one he thought was a maid.

Wine eases von Lerchenau's defeats, but his best high is in the letter from the chambermaid (actually Octavian) at the end of Act II of **DER ROSENKAVALIER** (The Knight of the Rose) by Richard Strauss.

\* \* \*

She can find **NAIAD, FAUNA OR SEX** on the island.

Naiad, Dryad and other mythical creatures inhabit this opera. The heroine ends up in Bacchus's arms. It is Richard Strauss's **ARIADNE AUF NAXOS**.

\* \* \*

Fighting for the people is not something that he should **LET MAR HIS DREAM**: to paint for the glory of God.

He is Mathias Grünewald, who diverts from his art to participate in the Peasants' War in 16th-century Germany. The opera is Paul Hindermith's **MATHIS DER MALER** (Mathis the Painter).

\* \* \*

Act III begins with a **SAD NOSE AT A MILL**, and ends with the heathen temple **AMASSED ON IT ALL**.

Nose to grindstone, slave at a mill, the hero and his people mourn his fall from grace. But in the end he brings down the roof, and all are buried in a pile of ruins in **SAMSON ET DALILA** by Camille Saint-Saëns.

\* \* \*

His blood marks the ground where they made love. Some may call it **DUEL STAINS ON DIRT**.

They are Wagner's **TRISTAN UND ISOLDE**. At the peak of the love duet, King Mark arrives and Melot wounds Tristan in a duel.

\* \* \*

The anagram **LASH CAIN, MOURN ABEL** fits any opera where man kills man. Let's get more specific. She predicts: **NO BULL, A RICH SEAMAN**. And who is she to make this prophecy? She is **ULRICA, NOBLE SHAMAN**.

The sorceress Ulrica predicts riches for the seaman Christiano (Silvano). Gustavo (Riccardo) slips a purse and a promotion into his pocket in Act I of Verdi's **UN BALLO IN MASCHERA** (A Masked Ball).

\* \* \*

In 1700s Scotland, **MICE LOAD RUMOR MAIL**.

More sneaky little mice than men, Henry and Norman intercept Edgar's letters and forge one, loading it with the rumor that he loves another than Lucy, in Donizetti's **LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR**.

\* \* \*



IF ALL EARS DON'T DOZE during this somewhat long Italian opera, they will hear some outstanding music. She must have been stunned by the events right before her death. But the final statement ensures us that her spirit rises to heaven. This ascension could be called **LEONORA'S DAZED LIFT**.

Leonora's brother stabs her after he is mortally wounded by her long-lost lover. She forgives all and dies. The Padre sings, "Salita a Dio" (Ascended to God). And so ends Verdi's **LA FORZA DEL DESTINO** (The Force of Destiny).

\* \* \*

It was the old man's **LAST AIM AT FUN—DEAD ON**.

**LA DAMNATION DE FAUST** by Hector Berlioz.

\* \* \*

Even **ONE DRAG SUSTAINS LIE**, or, more accurately, misinterpretation of a stink, that almost sent a marriage up in smoke.

The drag was on a cigarette, Susanna's secret vice, whose odor made her husband suspect her of having a lover, in **IL SEGRETO DI SUSANNA** (The Secret of Susanna) by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari.

\* \* \*

She had just undressed to sleep when the Sherrif shows up. She might observe with gentle pessimism: **LAW CALLS LATE, IF NUDE**.

Minnie wasn't totally naked, but she was down to her nightwear when Jack Rance came looking for the outlaw Ramerrez, alias Dick Johnson, in Puccini's **LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST** (The Girl of the Golden West).

\* \* \*

A life is cut short in vain in this short opera. Whenever I hear it, its **ARIAS RECALL A VAIN CUT**.

The life is that of Turiddu in Pietro Mascagni's **CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA** (Rustic Chivalry).

\* \* \*

The somber priest kept a wakeful eye on the virgin to see that she remained one. We who favor the lovers might tell him: "SLEEP, CHEERLESS PRUDE."

The priest is Nourabad in **LES PÊCHEURS DE PERLES** (The Pearl Fishers) by Georges Bizet.

\* \* \*

Before the curtain is up, we know that what we hear is made to be played widely at orchestral concerts. This **NOBLE OVERTURE DIGS IN; WINS WIDE.**

The overture to **DIE LUSTIGEN WEIBER VON WINDSOR** (The Merry Wives of Windsor) by Otto Nicolai is more frequently performed than the opera.

\* \* \*

One could have said to the talented young knight: **TIME NEVER RUINS SONG, GREEN BIRD.**

The green bird (novice song maker) is Walter von Stolzing. Over a century's time (four centuries in the story) has never ruined his lovely Prize Song in Wagner's **DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG** (The Mastersingers of Nuremberg).

\* \* \*

A famous leader **ROAMS ON DUNES** for 40 years with his brother and their people. He was **NO MESS AROUND** when it came to laying down the Law. The people were **SURE NO NOMADS**, because they eventually settled down in a land where there wouldn't be **ROMAN SONS DUE** for about 1,200 years.

Arnold Schoenberg's **MOSES UND ARON.**

\* \* \*

Bedding a madam or Bedlam with madmen. A barbate bride and a dirty-dealing devil. Despite its musical excellence, the plot **KEEPS RATHER GROSS.**

Tom Rakewell beds brothel madam Mother Goose and weds Baba the bearded lady. He plays cards for his soul with Nick Shadow, who loses and in anger takes Tom's sanity. Tom ends up in Bedlam, where he dies, in Igor Stravinsky's **THE RAKE'S PROGRESS.**

\* \* \*



The bride takes her life  
 When her father kills the groom.  
**LENDING WOE** to all the strife,  
 The Danes meet their doom.

The Saxons murder the Danes at the wedding feast  
 in Emmanuel Chabrier's **GWENDOLINE**.

\* \* \*

Don't look to Mozart or Rossini for the solution  
 to this anagram: **VET FIGARO'S HELL HOSTESS**. If you  
 need a hint, this opera was telecasted from the Met  
 on September 14, 1992.

Veteran of two plays, or operas, Figaro is now a  
 guest of sorts in a limbo beyond time, where he and  
 his author, Beaumarchais, attempt to entertain the  
 executed court of Louis XVI, then try to save Marie  
 Antoinette, in **THE GHOSTS OF VERSAILLES** by composer  
 John Corigliano and librettist William M. Hoffman.

\* \* \*

**INSTRUCT ON A FISH, TERESA** suggests the prelude  
 and Act I of this avant-garde 1930s American opera.

In the prelude, the chorus sings Gertrude Stein's  
 words: "Four saints prepare for Saints, Four saints  
 make it well fish. Four saints prepare for saints it  
 makes it well fish it makes it well fish prepare for  
 saints." Act I soon opens with St. Teresa of Avila  
 on the cathedral steps. She instructs on scenes from  
 her life. The opera is **FOUR SAINTS IN THREE ACTS** by  
 Virgil Thomson. The fish was a symbol of the Early  
 Christians that represented their Faith.

\* \* \*

**HE LANDED. GIRL FREED LONER** sums up the plot of  
 this salty yarn of redemption through love.

Every seven years his ship makes land. This time  
 a girl named Senta loves him and leaps into the sea,  
 which frees the lonely Dutchman from his sentence to  
 roam the sea eternally, in **DER FLIEGENDER HOLLÄNDER**  
 (The Flying Dutchman) by Richard Wagner.

\* \* \*

Here's a rarely-performed masterpiece from 1641: After a long voyage at sea, he enters his kingdom in a beggar's tattered rags. Were it a Greek play, he might proclaim: **"I SALT-AIR SOUL. I IN TORN PRIDE."**

He's Homer's famous hero in Claudio Monteverdi's **IL RITORNO D'ULISSE IN PATRIA** (The Return of Ulysses to his Country).

\* \* \*

Let's try something different. This brief piece of poetry describes the setting and situation of the opera and tells something of its history. Each line is an anagram on the opera's title.

**AMID STARLIGHT ON THIS HAVEN,  
HIS THIN MAGI TRAVEL HOT SAND.  
AH, SING THIS AND TRAVEL TO HIM.  
MEN HAD VITAL STAR SIT ON HIGH.  
O VAST HINT HAD HIS MANGER LIT;  
HIS HAVEN, MOST RADIANT LIGHT.**

**THEN LIT, MA HAD SAVIOR'S THING.  
MA'S TRIAL; HOT THIEVING HANDS.  
ANTHEM HIT: GOLD IS VAIN TRASH.  
HARD, HIS SAVING THIN, LAME TOT;  
HIM, AT HAND. LIVE STRAIGHT, SON.  
MAN HAS LIGHT. THIS AIRED ON TV.**

The Three Wise Men (Magi), Bethlehem bound, stop at the humble abode of a woman and her crippled son. Hoping to buy help for him, she steals the gold that was meant for the Infant Jesus. In the end, all is forgiven. The boy is miraculously healed and joins the Magi in their journey. The opera, **AM AHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS** by Gian-Carlo Menotti, was commissioned for performance on television in 1951.

\* \* \*

**A RUDE ENGLISH MAIDEN'S FUTURE.** That was all the lascivious overseer thought the exponent of woman's rights cared about; not her present female duty.

Women may have been slaves in 16th Century Turkey, But in England, even a servant girl knows that there's

no future in surrendering to such a status. This was the crux of the argument between Blonde and Osmin in the first scene of Act II of **DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL** (The Abduction from the Seraglio) by Mozart.

\* \* \*

The headline in this city's newspaper might have been: **FATTY AND MOSES TRIAL DUE—AND FLAG HUNG.**

The banner of capitalism will hang high over the trial of penniless Jim, defended by Fatty and prosecuted by Trinity Moses, in Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's **AUFSTIEG UND FALL DER STADT MAHAGONNY** (The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny).

\* \* \*

This one is more than just an opera and deserves at least an attempt at poetry. Again, each line is an anagram on the work. So is the poem's title.

### **BRED NINE GIRLS—NEED GUN**

LEGENDS BIND INNER URGE.  
INNER URGES BIND LEGEND.  
BLUNDERING NEEDS REIGN.  
RESIGN BLUNDERING NEED.

RUNES LED RED BEGINNING.  
RED BEGINNINGS END RULE.  
BLINDING GREED RUN SEEN  
UNDER BIG GREEN LINDENS.

In this Nordic legend, a god is bound by laws inscribed as runes on his spear. Conflicting with his needs, these bonds lead to bloodshed, shame, and his eventual downfall, when he fails to heed the warning to resign his inner urges. A blinding run for greed is seen at the site where his grandson rests under a linden tree before slaying the greedy dragon, in Wagner's **DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN** (The Ring of the Nibelung). About the poem's title: it may take more than a spear for Wotan to control his nine feisty Valkyrie daughters.

\* \* \*



## LOOSE ENDS AND LEFTOVERS

Although we have occasionally had to stretch our imagination, the anagrams, so far, have all had some relation to the operas from which they were derived. I found others that may not relate to their sources, but, since they are often interesting or amusing, we will list them. While you try to solve them, see if you can find any links between anagram and opera.

NICE DAD	—————	Leonard Bernstein's	CANDIDE
LATE FIND	—————	Eugen d'Albert's	TIEFLAND
DONUT RAT	—————	Giacomo Puccini's	TURANDOT
LACE SET	————	Christoph Willibald Gluck's	ALCESTE
COOL ORAL	—	Franco Leoni's	L'ORACOLO (The Oracle)
I'M PARKING	—————	Michael Tippett's	KING PRIAM
DON'T STAND	——	Gottfried von Einem's	DANTONS TOD (Danton's Death)
FIANCE LIAR	————	Giacomo Meyerbeer's	L'AFRICAINNE (The African Girl)
FAT OVAL AIR	————	Gaetano Donizetti's	LA FAVORITA (The Favorite)
MAN CUTS ALONE	—————	Puccini's	MANON LESCAUT
TEN HUGE SOULS	—————	Meyerbeer's	LES HUGUENOTS
SEND AIDA AN ODE	—	Henry Purcell's	DIDO AND AENEAS
TIN DICE HEAVEN	—	Benjamin Britten's	DEATH IN VENICE
HUG A LONE SLEEPER	—————	Ravel's	L'HEURE ESPAGNOLE (The Spanish Hour)
RAVEL AS A PARDON	——	Pergolesi's	LA SERVA PADRONA (The Maid as Mistress)
RUE FOX NEAR SHEEP	—	Offenbach's	ORPHEE AUX ENFERS (Orpheus in Hades)
A RIB, LORD BEETLE	——	Meyerbeer's	ROBERT LE DIABLE (Robert the Devil)
I ADOPT HER	—————	Camille Erlanger's	APHRODITE
MUD FILE ERASED	——	Johann Strauss's	DIE FLEDERMAUS (The Bat)
DARE ASK ME	—————	Carl Nielsen's	MASKERADE
FIRE OR ICE ODE DUE	——	Glucks's	ORFEO ED EURIDICE
MOB COOLS HER PITCH	—	Darius Milhaud's	CHRISTOPHE COLOMB (Christopher Columbus)
HANG ONE FUTURE MOVE	—	Arnold Schoenberg's	VON HEUTE AUF MORGEN (From To- day to Tomorrow)

A REAL RUT, CHIEF POET — Benjamin Britten's THE RAPE  
 OF LUCRETIA  
 LET MEN PLEASE LADIES — Claude Debussy's PELLÉAS  
 ET MÉLISANDE  
 FONDLES CHANTS OF MEN — Jacques Offenbach's LES  
 CONTES D'HOFFMANN (The  
 Tales of Hoffmann)  
 I DARE THE WEIRD LEMON — Paul Hindermith's DIE  
 HARMONIE DER WELT (The  
 Harmony of the Cosmos)  
 MAKING TEN HELLS — Richard Rodney Bennett's  
 ALL THE KING'S MEN  
 EERIE UNBEARABLE BAT — Paul Dukas's ARIANE ET BARBE  
 BLEUE (Ariana and Bluebeard)  
 IBERIA, A DIVISIBLE GIRL — Rossini's IL BARBIERE DI  
 SIVIGLIA (The Barber of  
 Seville)  
 DISHED TRICKS RULE OPERA — Mozart's DER SCHAUSPIEL-  
 DIREKTOR (The Impresario)

Here are some with more than one anagram.

ORE IN LAND \* A LION NERD \* NO IRELAND — Puccini's  
 LA RONDINE (The Swallow)

A DIME MISER \* A MIME RIDES — Rossini's SEMIRAMIDE

ONE EAR CAN TELL \* NO CLEANER TALE — Rossini's  
 LA CENERENTOLA (Cinderella)

LUCIA'S ORANGE \* GO AS LUNAR ICE — Puccini's  
 SUOR ANGELICA (Sister Angelica)

I BLAST OVER BEDS \* BAD IS OVERBLEST \* I STABBED  
 LOVERS — Richard Wagner's early opera DAS LIEBSVERBOT  
 (The Forbidden Love)

GETS A FRIEND \* GREED FAINTS \* FEEDING STAR \* GREAT  
 FIENDS — Richard Strauss's FRIEDENSTAG (Peace Day)

SOUL SISTER DICE GAME DEAL \* GOAL LETS 'EM DARE  
 SUICIDES Francis Poulenc's DIALOGUES DES CARMÉLITES  
 (The Dialogues of the Carmelites)

A SULLEN OIL POOL JUDGEMENT \* MEN PULL A GLUED JOINT  
 LOOSE — Adolphe Adam's LE POSTILLON DE LONGJUMEAU  
 (The Coachman of Longjumeau)



YE FACE FUN - BRING THEIR URN \* BAR CHEERING - FUNNY IF TRUE — Britten's THE BURNING, FIERY FURNACE (The Biblical story about King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attempting to incinerate the Three Children of Israel in a gigantic kiln).

JOVIAL MEN, ALERT DIALOGUE \* TRUE LOVE IN A JAM. ALL GO DIE \* DO IT ALL, OR A JUVENILE GAME — Frederick Delius's A VILLAGE ROMEO AND JULIET.

### DO IT YOURSELF

Here are some suggestions for those who want to invent their own anagrams.

If you're new at it, start with modest-size subjects (not over 15 letters) with good distributions of useful letters. Leoncavallo's I PAGLIACCI is a tough nut to crack. Rimski-Korsakov's LE COQ D'OR (The Golden Cockerel) lacks a U to accompany the Q. Rossini's LA GAZZA LADRA (The Thieving Magpie) has two troublesome Zs and no other vowels than the five As. Before you begin, be sure that you have the correct spelling of your subject.

Look for interesting key words, if possible, ones that relate to the subject. Then see what you can do with the remaining letters. Most people can juggle up to ten letters mentally, but anything larger should be worked on paper or with anagram tiles. You can usually find them in stores where scrabble sets are sold. If you don't have any, you can print the letters on an index card so that they can be cut out as one-inch squares. Underline the letters C, U, M, W, N, and Z, in case they get turned around. Shift these letters about on a smooth, flat surface. When you find key words that you want to use, juggle the remaining letters. If you can't make a good anagram, try altering the key word; e.g., with prefixes, suffixes, or variant endings (-s, -es, -ed, -er, -ing). If it still doesn't work out, try new key words. It is usually a good idea to find uses for problem letters when beginning an anagram. These are letters that are less often used (J, Q, X, Z, etc.) or ones that you have a burdensome number of, like those five As



in **LA GAZZA LADRA**. Problem letters tend to dictate the possibilities.

If you prefer to work on paper, print your subject in ink and underline extracted letters lightly in pencil. If you have to start over, these pencil lines can be erased. Print left over letters near your extracted words, then juggle them using pencil underlines.

Take the time to find a number of anagrams for a subject. Your first tries may not be the best. But if a subject is failing to yield results, don't push it to the point of exasperation. Switch to another one for a while. Remember, it's supposed to be fun.

Become familiar with words that may occur often and have several invertible possibilities. Here are just a few:

**LEAD \* DEAL \* DALE \*\*\* SAINT \* STAIN \* SATIN  
VILE \* VEIL \* LIVE \* EVIL \*\* EAR \* ARE \* ERA  
TIME \* MITE \* ITEM \* EMIT \*\* TAP \* PAT \* APT  
GRAB \* GARB \* BRAG \*\*\*\*\* FOWL \* FLOW \* WOLF  
CARE \* RACE \* ACRE \*\*\*\*\* ARMS \* RAMS \* MARS  
STAR \* TARS \* ARTS \* RATS \*\* NOW \* WON \* OWN  
STRIPE \* TRIPES \* ESPRIT \* RIPEST \* PRIEST  
TONES \* NOTES \* SETON \* ONSET \* STENO \* STONE**

In time you will discover many more. Transposing the letters in just one or two words can make a big difference in an anagram. When I worked my anagrams for Delius's **A VILLAGE ROMEO AND JULIET**, I came up with **TRUE LOVE IN A LOG MADE JAIL**. Then I saw that it could also be **A LAME DOG JAIL**, **A MALE GOD JAIL**, or **A DOG MEAL JAIL**. My ultimate choice was none of these.

Transposing the positions of words can also make a difference. The anagram for Debussy's **PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE** was **LET MEN PLEASE LADIES**. It could have been **LET LADIES PLEASE MEN** or **LADIES LET MEN PLEASE**.

Scramble your anagrams well. Don't leave the **TAN** in **TANNHÄUSER**, the **GRIN** in **LOHENGRIN**, or the **RUNG** in **GÖTTERDÄMERUNG**, unless you have a very good reason. Worse yet would be to keep the **NIGHT** in **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM**. Articles, conjunctions, prepositions, and pronouns should be either scrambled or incorporated into other words; e.g., **THE** into **BROTHER**, **AND**

into GRAND, OF into SOFT, or HIM into CHIMES. From Puccini's SUOR ANGELICA, LUCIA'S ORANGE was plucked unsliced, because it's unlikely that many have ever noticed the unscrambled orange within the title, and it is amusing to point it out.

One solution to anagram problems, barely touched on as yet, is the use of initials. If the initials are highly recognized, or possibly better known than what they stand for (USA, USSR, FBI, LSD, etc.), it is legitimate to use them in anagrams. I had a hard time finding good anagrams for Amilcare Ponchielli's LA GIOCONDA (The Ballad Singer). One that I could have used is CIA GONDOLA, since the opera's setting is Venice, Italy, and there is the spy in the works (Barnaba, spy of the Inquisition).

### CODA AND FINALE

LA GIACONDA was the first opera that we mentioned in this book (recall its librettist ARRIGO BOITO, alias TOBIA GORRIO). It is fitting that this opera should take us to the coda and finale. But then, speaking of LA GIOCONDA, it seems that I LAG ON CODA. So we will have just a few brief closing comments.

The suggestions that I made for working anagrams are ones that I find useful. You may discover other approaches that you prefer. There are many operas that were not included here, many more possible anagrams on ones that were included, and many subjects other than opera that are worthy of having anagrams made on them. There are, for example, composers of opera. There are also the many other composers who never wrote any operas. Early in this book we gave anagrams for Felix Mendelssohn, Gustav Holst, Alban Berg, Pietro Mascagni, and Wilhelm Richard Wagner. Here are some anagrams on other composers' names.

I GO AS COINS IN CHOIR	—————	GIOACCHINO ROSSINI
TO AN AVID VIOLIN	—————	ANTONIO VIVALDI
BREAK A BOLT	—————	BÉLA BARTÓK
ENTICE ANIMALS, LASS	—————	CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS
ANGEL-BORNE CHORDS	—————	ARNOLD SCHOENBERG
GRAND REICH WAR	—————	RICHARD WAGNER *

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\* We already did an anagram on him as Richard Wilhelm Wagner, but it is interesting to examine possible anagrams with and without middle name.



HE BANS HORN JAMS ————— JOHANNES BRAHMS  
 ZEROES GET BIG ————— GEORGES BIZET  
 HER TOUGH RANGER ————— ARTHUR HONEGGER  
 LAST GRAVE HUM ————— GUSTAV MAHLER  
 EERIE VIOLIN MASS ————— OLIVIER MESSIAEN  
 REAL T-BONE DINNERS ————— LEONARD BERNSTEIN  
 BUSY SCALE, DUDE ————— CLAUDE DEBUSSY  
 AN OK LAZY DOLT ————— ZOLTAN KODALY  
 NAME BURNS TORCH ————— ROBERT SCHUMANN  
 SEARCH VEILS ————— CHARLES IVES  
 KEEP FIVE, SIR, OR GO ————— SERGEI PROKOFIEV  
 CLEVER ARIA; WARN MOB ————— CARL MARIA VON WEBER  
 BE MORE, MY EGO: I CARE ————— GIACOMO MEYERBEER  
 GOD, SUCH A LONER ————— CHARLES GOUNOD  
 TRAIN HELD HIM UP ————— PAUL HINDERMITH  
 DRIVE US PIG PIE ————— GIUSEPPI VERDI  
 I DON'T GAZE INTO TEA ————— GAETANO DONIZETTI  
 DIG RED GRAVE ————— EDVARD GRIEG  
 I'D AID A RUM LUSH ————— DARIUS MILHAUD  
 RAISE KITE ————— ERIK SATIE  
 PRIZE BLUE ORE ————— PIERRE BOULEZ  
 LEASES JUST MEN ————— JULES MASSENET  
 RABBLE AMUSER ————— SAMUEL BARBER  
 LARGE RED WAD ————— EDWARD ELGAR  
 SKY DRUMS GOT MOSES ————— MODEST MUSSORGSKY  
 HIS OVERLY PATHETIC KICK — PETER ILICH TCHAIKOVSKY  
 CAN'T SHAME BRIDE ————— BEDRICH SMETANA  
 ASIAN HENS' BANJO BATCH ————— JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH  
 MOUNT FLAG; WAR AMAZES GOD — WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART  
 I CHIRP WITH OLD BLACK GULLS — CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK

In parting, one easy opera anagram:

This work, like many others that we've mentioned, has a devil of a lot of fine arias for US FAT opera singers to perform.

We couldn't say goodbye without doing an anagram on Charles Gounod's FAUST.

### POETIC POSTSCRIPT

In 1983 I published my poem DRUM SONATAS. It introduced a novel technique in poetry that I call serial anagram composition. DRUM SONATAS is an anagram on NOSTRADAMUS, the 16th-century French physician and



astrologer, most famous for his prophecies, written in rather kryptic verse. My poem is a continuum of over ninety anagrams on **NOSTRADAMUS**. Every eleven letters of the poetry employs the eleven letters in **NOSTRADAMUS**.

There is an obvious parallel between serial anagram poetry composition and the serial twelve-tone technique developed by Arnold Schoenberg. His system, put simply, avoids tonality in music by employing all twelve notes of the chromatic scale, vertically or horizontally, in a selected series, before repeating the series in another way. The purpose of serial anagram composition is to maintain the qualities and balance of compounded alliterative sounds while exploring the many possible variations that a series offers.

The eight-line anagram poems I gave here for **DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN** and **AMAH! AND THE NIGHT VISITORS** hint at the possibilities of serial anagram poetry. They were, however, somewhat rigidly constructed in the form of one line, sentence or phrase per anagram series. This, of course, was done intentionally to conform to the purpose of this book. Serial anagram composition allows greater freedom and flow, because the anagram borders are not that confined. The following segment from **DRUM SONATAS** demonstrates. Slash marks indicate the end of one **NOSTRADAMUS** series and the beginning of the next. The poem was printed in normal mixed type, so we will not use bold capitals.

A rum-sot sandman roasts a dad's amounts.  
 Radars on smut, /amour stands/Mass  
 Round a tart's mound,  
 As/Adam's son trusts a mud roan./  
 Trams sound. A/matador suns./  
 Ma's rotund as/sat on a drum./

This stanza begins and ends with whole anagrams. This need not be the case. Anagrams are free to lap over from one stanza to the next.

The name Nostradamus has a particular ring to it: strong and imposing; its first two syllables, sharply angular; the final two, poundingly heavy. It suits the poem, which stabs and hammers at modern foibles.

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\*Also the lyrics on this book's front cover based on its title.

The effect of its consonants is persistent, because they are all immutable (always make the same sounds). An anagram with transmutable consonants is, for instance, **OTTORINO RESPIGHI**. The **G** can be hard (**GET**), soft (**GIN**), banded with **N** (**RING**), or silent (**NIGHT**). The **S**, **P** or **T** can combine with the **H** (**SHOOT**, **PHOTO**, **THE**, or **THING**).

Because many operative words (articles, conjunctions, prepositions, etc.) may not be available in an anagram, one often must find a speech style that works without them. An anagram may not have all the letters needed to complete a key word or phrase. If so, one may have the opportunity for creative word-play. Here is an excerpt from my anagram poem **MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY NEW YEAR**:

Sip. Try a weepy ashram myrrh censer.  
Here my pawns may party rich in a pear tree.  
Why cry? Spasm rhymes with chasm.  
Prepare my yarn:  
Rye—water chaser, my spry man.  
Rip hysteria.  
Hymen pyres warm chary preppies.  
Ay! Why rent Mary's charms?  
Prayer-pew martyrs chain my hearth.  
Pray chimney sweeps marry.  
Rapiers parch yawns.  
My, My! Three PM, tiny swarmers.  
A cheery harpy chirps party-weary rhymes.  
Amen! My pitch may answer her prayers.

The poem reflects the run-on ramblings of a lonely man in a tavern who has had a few too many holiday cheers. This situation invites a kind of free-roaming, sometimes-punning stream-of-semiconsciousness fugue around seasonal themes: parties, prayer, hearth and chimney, myrrh, and a partridge in a pear tree.

This time I didn't mark the anagram divisions of the excerpt with slashes. Again, it begins and ends with complete anagrams. Every twenty-six letters is an anagram on **MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY NEW YEAR**.

If you want more information about serial anagram poetry composition, send \$1 to TCA, POB 3684, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266.



## WAS IT FUN?

Here are a few more operatic anagrams that were not included in the pages of this book.

The opulent wealth often displayed in grand opera is **BEYOND GRASPS** of the poor folk in this American folk opera.

George Gershwin's **PORGY AND BESS**.

\* \* \*

He threw himself at her. She wedded his friend. When he saw her again, he **RETHREW** himself at her.

Again and again Massenet's **WERTHER** threw himself at Charlotte. In the end he threw his life away.

\* \* \*

His peers from the Borough gathered grimly on the shore, some to peer out at sea while his boat sank. We can call this a **GRIM PEER SET**.

Benjamin Britten's **PETER GRIMES**.

\* \* \*

As poison slowed the muscles of her dinner guests, she might have bade them, "**GRUB LAZIER. CIAO.**"

**LUCREZIA BORGIA** by Donizetti.

\* \* \*

Although this anagram's spelling is a bit mod for the story's time, this corpulent rascal shared many **FAT LAFFS** with his regiment of ragged rascallions.

The last laugh was shared by all in Verdi's final stage work, the comic opera **FALSTAFF**.

Did you enjoy Operatic Anagrams? Would you like to see a sequel? Let me know. If I get enough encouragement, I'll do one on operas and other great works of music. John Andrew Mann, c/o TCA, POB 3684, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266.